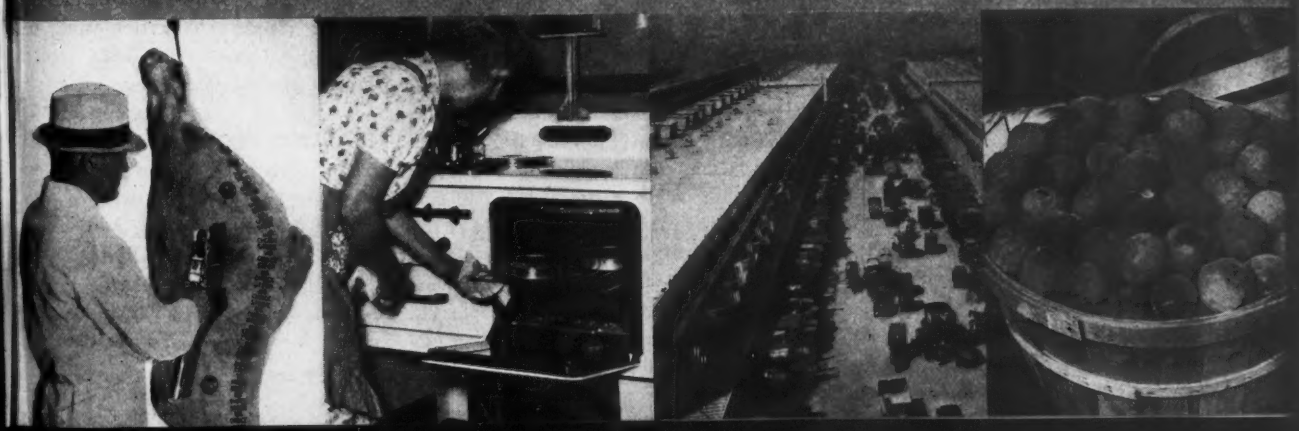
CONSUMERS' GUIDE

AUGUST 1938



CONSUMERS' GUIDE

AUGUST 1938 VOLUME V, NUMBER 7

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D. E. MONTGOMERY, Consumers' Counsel

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A PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA, READER, manager of a small grocery co-op, tells us how she uses some of the ideas suggested by the *Guide* for consumer education. Against a background of co-op reading material, secured from the local library and other sources, she arrayed in her store window a display of fossils collected in the Kettleman Hills oil fields in California. "We have a portion of the petrified tusk of a mastodon which is 1½ million years old and 14 sharks' teeth that are 500,000 years old. To tie the two very different ideas together we had a large poster, saying, 'The Cooperative movement may not be as old as these fossils but see how it has grown since it was started in 1844 by a group of 28 Rochdale English weavers.' "

Other exhibits included one showing the confusion of can sizes which face present-day consumers; others showed meat grading panels and Government clothing selection charts. She reports that her local papers have been giving good publicity to all displays.

From the *Consumers' Guide* of January 31, 1938, this inventive store manager made up an exhibit on fireproofing (See "An Ounce of Prevention"). Describing this exhibit she says, "We ordered borax and boric acid in 100-pound sacks, packaged it ourselves, and sold it to customers. The main part of the exhibit is a picture taken from a San Francisco paper a few days ago, a picture of a little girl who was burned to death by coming too near a backyard bonfire. My caption is, 'You can avoid this by fireproofing with a borax-boric acid solution.' I have samples of material burned before and after fireproofing. Then from the January 31, 1938 *Consumers' Guide* I cut the pages of 'An Ounce of Prevention,' and mounted those with a card saying 'This and similar articles are to be found in the *Consumers' Guide.*' "

NUBBINS of news from the trade and public press, from consumers in action, and government at work for consumers: Consumer groups working for informative labeling are given ideas for "activities" by the Consumer-Retailer Relations Council in a special bulletin. . . Trade practice rules for labeling recently promulgated by the Federal Trade Commission include: Furs (see our lead article in this issue); shrinkage of woven cotton yard goods; macaroni, noodles and related products. . . Further boost for informative labeling comes from the General Federation of Women's Clubs who passed these resolutions at their Kansas City Convention: (1) commending "the Federal Trade Commission for the protection which it has afforded to consumers and urge its continuance of this work until fibers in common use are accurately identified"; (2) resolving that "Congress be urged to supplement the powers of the Federal Trade Commission so that the Commission may extend further protection to the consumer by bringing about fuller informative labeling." . . . Teachers from all over the country, gathering in the National Education Association convention in New York City recently, received a report from the Association's Committee on Cooperatives, suggesting that schools would do well to "parallel civilization and not lag behind," and pointing out how the study of various phases of cooperation might suitably be made a part of courses in high schools and colleges. . . New York City's Department of Markets reports a special check-up of 4,511 filling stations revealed 397 short-weight violations and 600 pumps deficient in one way or another. . . A bill to provide for compulsory grading of meats sold in New York was voted down by New York's City Council. . . The Consumer Conference of Greater Cincinnati is circulating petitions in favor of compulsory meat grading in that city. . . "Bread production (in New Orleans, La.)," states a trade paper, "took a heavy blow as consumption dropped off sharply, attributed in part to the increase in prices which now makes the cheapest loaf of bread 6 cents in the majority of bakeries." (See news about bread in Your Food Supplies and Costs in this issue.). . . A proposal to amend New York State's Constitution, introduced in the constitutional Convention now meeting in Albany, and backed by consumer, labor, and farm groups, received an unfavorable vote from the committee. . . A questionnaire distributed by a magazine to 2,000 home economists asking them to list in order of preference material used to best advantage in their consumer education work, reveals the *Consumers' Guide* second highest in a list of 222 items.

PUTTING FINISHING TOUCHES on fur coats is the job of the workers photographed on the cover of this issue (courtesy of *Fortune Magazine*). Their work is to sew linings, tape edges, make buttons and button holes. Making fur coats is a hand job, and most shops employ fewer than 20 workers.

Tips for Fur Buyers

Investments in fur wraps—even at August sales—should come only after learning wise buying rules

HEATING ENGINEERS had no idea they were setting things up for the furriers when they began to install central heating plants in American homes, but when radiators got hot enough in the winter to keep people warm without recourse to heavy underclothing, it became necessary, in the interests of comfort, to redesign clothing. For indoors clothes became lighter, but for out-of-doors heavier outer garments became necessary. Heavy, warm overcoats became urgent necessities, and the furriers responded to their opportunity by beginning to make and sell fur coats within reach of consumers on the middle rungs of the economic ladder.

Time was when kings and queens promulgated what were called sumptuary laws which prescribed what people could and could not eat, and could and could not wear. Among these laws were some which said that only kings could wear certain furs, that only bishops could wear other furs, and only the nobility could wear still other furs. Then in addition there were classes of people who were by law forbidden to wear any kind of furs at all. As time progressed, and absolutism gave way to constitutional governments, men won guarantees which were eventually incorporated in Bills of Rights, and women—whether they were "noblewomen" or not—won the right to wear fur coats, provided they could pay for them.

Enjoying the right to wear a fur coat, and actually having one to wear, can be and—for millions of consumers—are two very different enjoyments. Achieving the latter remains largely a matter of sufficient income, despite the accomplishments of furriers in bringing many less costly furs within reach of middle-income consumers. We propose here no tricks for stepping up small incomes to the fur-coat level; but for those consumers whose purses can encompass a fur wrap, some buying hints are given on how to make their money count most in fur values.

● FAIR TRADE PRACTICE RULES for the fur industry have recently been promulgated by the Federal Trade Commission. Designed in the public interest originally to protect fur dealers from the unfair trade practices of other fur dealers, these rules as finally formulated are a big step toward a Be-Fair-To-Fur-Consumers Movement.

Striking first at the shabbiest of unfair practices, the Rules forbid the misrepresentation of the grade, quality, or kind of fur, by advertisements or labels. But misrepresentation can be achieved through an omission of a relevant statement as well as by a downright lie. The Commission forbids both kinds of deceptions.

Branding a fur with some coined name without explaining at the same time just what kind of fur it actually is, is forbidden.

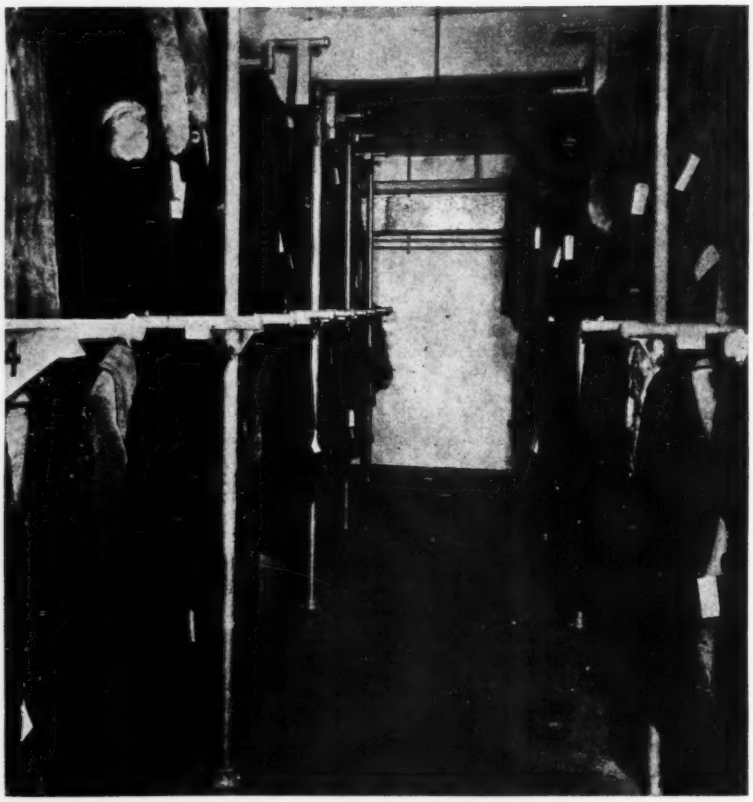
Making up a fur name, like "sealine", and then advertising it as the skin of a "sealine" is forbidden. No fur, the Commission says, may be advertised as the skin of a non-existent animal.

Romanticizing the fur of a domestic animal by calling it the fur of a foreign animal is not permitted, nor may dealers misrepresent the geographic origin of their furs. Few people have the economic strength even to ask to look at a genuine imported Russian sable, but if they do, then the fur which the dealer brings out to show them must actually be a sable trapped in the Soviet Union.

If furs are tipped, blended, pointed, or dyed, this fact must be disclosed in the advertisements and on the labels. If a fur is made of pieces, tails, paws, and fur odds and ends, this fact must be disclosed on the label. And finally, if the fur is made from second-hand, worn, or used furs, or if the garment is second-hand, worn or used, the advertisements and label must tell consumers so.

Nor do the rules permit lip service to ethical practices or sleight-of-hand evasion. Everyone at some time or other has seen advertisements which announced a sale on Northern Seal coats in letters large enough to have proclaimed the Armistice, with an asterisk referring to a line in fine print at the bottom of the page reading "Dyed Rabbit." Under rule 12 of the Fur Trade Practice Rules this is forbidden.

● CORRECTLY LABELED FURS under these provisions must contain the true name of the fur and if it is dyed, or blended, this fact too. For example, a rabbit which is dyed to resemble seal must be labeled, "Seal-



NO MOTHS ever see this scene in a modern storage room where furs and other garments are perfectly protected against moth ravages by tight storage and fumigation. Home storage properly done can be effective too.

dyed Rabbit." Hudson seal coats today under the same order must be labeled "Seal-dyed Muskrat" which means, of course, that muskrat has been dyed to simulate seal. "Coney," meaning rabbit, may possibly be used if the seller can and will sell it without deceiving or misleading the purchaser.

Genuine, as a descriptive word in an advertisement or on a label, has its place, the Commission believes, but not to describe an imitation fur, even though the imitation fur is correctly named. For example, Mink-dyed Marmot is the skin of a Eurasian prairie dog dyed to simulate mink. Called "Mink-dyed Marmot" it is correctly named. But, the Commission says, it is an unfair trade practice to put "genuine" in front of the name to make it read "Genuine Mink-dyed Marmot." To unwary consumers, the Commission reasons, this use of "genuine" is misleading.

"I can get it for you wholesale," often has been a come-on to uninformed consumers. The Commission has put a prohibiting foot down on retail furriers who falsely purport to sell wholesale, on retailers who pretend to be but are not manufacturing furriers, and, in fact, on any dealer in furs who says that he is something he is not.

● FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION frowns, under the regulations, are also reserved for dealers who advertise free repairs or storage with a garment, when actually the cost of this service is included in the price. Fake sale of "samples," of showroom models, and of Hollywood models, and bankruptcy sales come under the FTC ban. Finally, among the bans that protect consumers, there is the one which forbids marking down fur garments from fictitious prices. When fur dealers advertise fur coats in the future as markdowns from $350, they must actually be markdowns from $350.

How meticulously these rules will be observed cannot be told in advance. A good practice for fur purchasers who want to be on the safe side is to buy from reputable merchants who play the game fair.

Going beyond even the recommendations of the Federal Trade Commission some American stores use labels that tell consumers not only what kind of furs they are buying, but what they can expect of them. One of these labels attached to a broadtail coat says, for example: "This is strictly a luxury fur and should be selected only for its beauty and fashion importance. Its flat silky character lends itself to distinctive style treatment, but it should not be expected to wear well." Of a seal-dyed rabbit coat the label says: "Rabbit skins from Australia or New Zealand, sheared and dyed to resemble seal-dyed Coney or Rabbit. Only the best quality pelts will give reasonably good wear."

Remarkable only because such information is rarely supplied to consumers, labels like these enable consumers to buy furs intelligently and safely. One way to encourage the practice of informative labeling, obviously, is to ask for it from the man who sells.

● FURS which come from all over the world, but chiefly from the United States, the Soviet Union, and China, are obtained usually by trapping wild animals, but with a growing market dependent upon a regular source of supplies, even this most untamed of economic activities is being domesticated. Today in the United States there are fur farms where silver fox and mink are bred for their furs commercially. In the Soviet Union sables and silver foxes are bred on farms. In South America the almost extinct chinchilla may yet stage a comeback as the result of fur farm activities.

Fur, which is the hair and skin of an animal, is really two kinds of hair occurring together: the downy, soft, silky, curly underfur; and the guard hair, which is stiff, long and straight. Guard hairs, sometimes, are removed from the furs of animals like the beaver

and the otter, to expose the softer glossy under-hair.

General rules explain little of the differences between furs. For one kind of fur, the colder the native region of the animal, the finer, hardier, and thicker its hair. Fur of animals that come from marshlands, rivers, shady forests, is dark in color; that of animals from the bleak north is light. On fur farms, the practical biologist can, by careful breeding and feeding, within limits, enhance considerably the quality of furs.

Finally, the time of the year makes a difference in the quality. Furs are most luxuriant when taken during the coldest part of the winter; the leather of furs taken earlier has a bluish tinge; the leather of furs taken later is whitish and does not have bluish unprimed spots on them. Furs taken at exactly the right time are called prime furs, and are the most valuable.

Most furs in the United States are trapped by farmers and their sons, as a winter sideline to their regular activities. Many of these furs are then shipped to dealers who sort and grade them. Some mail order houses, too, accept furs in payment for their goods.

● RAW PELTS once they get to the manufacturer, pass through a number of processes which, though they have been improved from the days when primitive hunters scraped, tanned, and sewed their fur garments together, are nevertheless substantially unchanged. The underside of the fur is first placed on a board and scraped with a dull knife to remove the flesh and fat. Inexpensive furs are then placed either in a vat or a drum and wetted. More expensive furs are placed in a similar drum with damp sawdust. In the next process skins like beaver, nutria, and otter, have their long guard hairs removed so as to expose the under-hair. This is accomplished partly by the use of a depilatory, and partly by the efforts of an expert workman, who rubs, jerks, or pulls the guard hairs out to leave only the silky downy underfur. Now the fur is ready for defleshing, by machine if the furs are inexpensive, and by hand if the furs are expensive rare skins.

Next step from raw fur to dressed fur is the tanning process. By brushing or soaking in a salt and acid solution, a formaldehyde solution, or sometimes a vegetable tan, they are made to swell up and are coated with a film which stops a deterioration that would otherwise follow naturally.

Tramping the furs follows next. Originally the furs were actually trampled on with bare feet to soften them, but today furs are put into what is called a kicker, a half cylinder equipped with wooden blocks on the end of long wooden arms. These blocks pound dressing oils into the skins until they are pliable.

After another stretching, and a preliminary combing and beating the furs finally go into a rotary drum with dry sawdust which absorbs the grease from the furs. Very greasy furs, however, are drummed in several changes of sawdust until clean. To remove the sawdust which is now well distributed through the fur hairs, the furs are placed in a rotating cage which is turned until all the sawdust is shaken out.

Dyeing is a separate process in the preparation of the dressed fur. Furs are dyed to emphasize the natural characteristics of the fur, to simulate other furs, or because the current style decrees a certain color. Sometimes, too, dyes are applied to conceal a fur defect.

THESE jaywalking leopard pelts are crossing Seventh Avenue in New York City from the shop of a dealer in dressed furs to a small manufacturer of coats. Some eighty percent of America's fur coats are made by firms along or just off of Seventh Avenue in New York City from 24th to 31st Sts.

● "BLENDED FURS" are furs which have been colored by running a brush or feather over the top hairs. Called variously blending, tipping, shading or feathering, this is done chiefly to such furs as martens, fishers, and minks to produce an even shade when the furs do not exactly match each other.

To make the less exclusive red fox, and the low quality silver fox furs resemble the snobbish fine quality silver foxes, furriers use a method called "Pointing". Red foxes are dyed black and then white badger hairs are glued close to the leather or skin of the fur. Inferior silver foxes are pointed up, too, in this manner. To tell a pointed fox from a genuine silver fox examine the base of the hairs to see if the white hairs come in clusters of two or three. If they do, they are badger hairs glued in. Badger hairs have white tips, while the white silver fox hairs have a black tip with a middle white band.

"L e a t h e r i n g," "resetting," and "dropping" are feats of the skilled furrier. Full-haired, thick furs such as European white fox are frequently cut into strips and then sewn together with strips of leather inserted between the fur strips. By this process wooly looking furs are made to appear fluffy and the tendency to mat is reduced. This is also done to make a small pelt larger, or to make two pelts where originally there was only one.

● MINK FURS are "dropped" or "let out." Furriers with razor-edge knives slice the mink pelts into tiny strips which are then stitched together diagonally. As a result the original fur is made into a long strip twice as long and half as wide. Used only on the most expensive furs, this process results in coats with long narrow stripes.

"Letting in" on the other hand is the reverse of "dropping." The fur skin

[*Concluded on page 22*]

A guide to furs follows on pages 6 and 7.

A CONSUMERS GUIDE TO FURS

FUR	CHARACTERISTICS AND USES
BEAVER	The color varies from dark brown to lighter shades. Guard hairs are removed in most cases and the soft beautiful silky underground is disclosed. The fur is extensively used for collars, cuffs, trimmings, and garments.
CALF	Used to imitate Pony, Lamb, and Ocelot in coats and trimmings. Hair has tendency to break off leaving bare places.
CIVET CAT	The Civet Cat which is a trade name for the spotted skunk has a black skin with very conspicuous white markings. Is used for coats and trimmings.
JAPANESE MINK	Smaller size but paler member of the mink family, naturally a light brown almost orange, the fur is always dyed dark brown to simulate Mink.
KOLINSKY	The Kolinsky which is also known as the red sable is naturally yellowish but it is usually dyed black to simulate sable.
KRIMMER	The Krimmer is a member of the sheep family and possesses a curl which is similar to Persian Lamb. It is a light grey in color varying to a dark grey. It has well developed open curls that form flat ringlets.
LEOPARD	Small supple skins with short hair and well placed markings most desirable. Somaly Leopards shed extensively but snow Leopards, found chiefly in the Himalayan Mountains, do not shed. Better quality Leopard skins have flat silky hairs and marked contrast between spots and body color.
MARMOT	All Marmots are dyed. Naturally the fur is yellow to brown sprinkled with hairs of darker shades. The finest varieties are of a bluish hue. These skins dye better than the yellowish varieties. Marmots are frequently dyed to simulate Mink and Sable.

MARTEN

The Stone Marten varies from the darkest shade of brown to the lightest shade of fawn. The underground is pale and often purple-like in color. It is not usually dyed. Baum Marten which comes naturally in dark brown to yellow is usually blended. Jap Marten which is the least expensive of the Martens is naturally yellow. It too is usually dyed to resemble Sable.

MUSKRAT

This fur varies from a reddish brown to a very dark brown. The finest specimens are of a blue-black shade. The natural blue black skins are not dyed, but other types are sheared and dyed to be sold as Hudson Seal.

NUTRIA

A South American rodent this fur is sometimes sold as the South American Beaver. It is a light sandy color with some shades varying to a dark brown. The dark better grades are sold in the natural color while the lighter colors are dyed.

OPOSSUM

Australian Opossum, which is more expensive usually than the American variety, ranges in color from blue grey to yellow, though the yellow shades are usually dyed to resemble the blue grey shades. The American Opossum is a silver grey on a white background. There are also black guard hairs. Usually dyed in various colors.

PERSIAN LAMB

Persian Lamb may be black, brown, white or mottled, but most skins are dyed black. Even naturally black skins are dyed to make them uniform in color. Persians are used for garments and trimmings. The hair has a beautiful curl and the more perfect the curl the more valuable the skin. Curls may be tight as well as loose.

PONY

Pony furs are from Russian ponies. The furs vary in color from mouse grey to a deep rich dark brown. The most desirable furs are covered with very little hair and have markings upon them that are very similar to moire silk. The dark brown shades are sold in the natural colors, whereas the lighter shades are usually dyed.

RABBIT

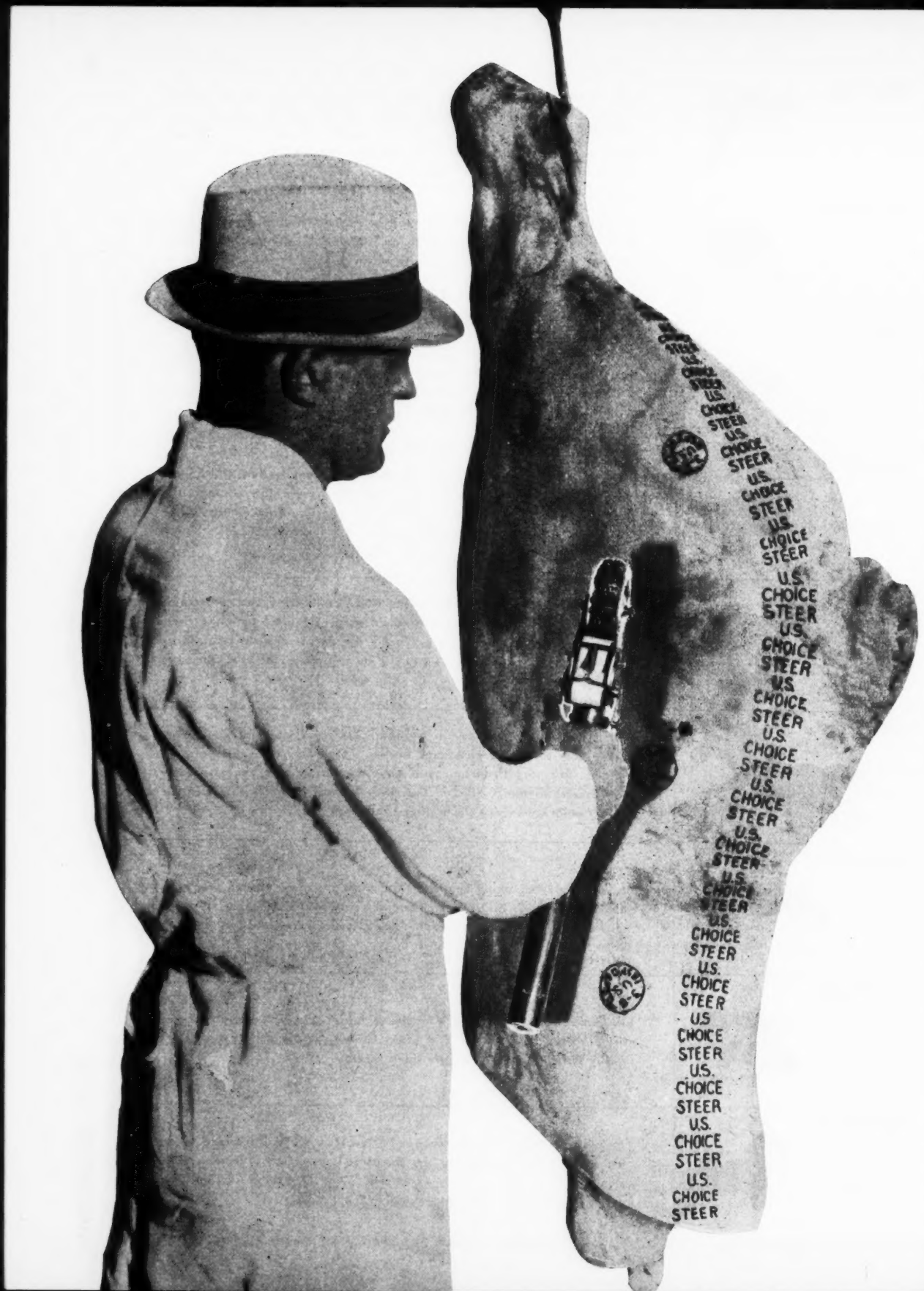
Rabbits are dyed many shades. The most frequent shades are, however, brown, mole and blue. They are sold under a variety of trade names. Some of these are coney, lapin, marmotine, and bay seal.

RACCOON

The Raccoon is grey with long white hairs of a bluish tint. Some are of a brownish shade. The finest furs, however, are those that are thickly furred and have a very dark center.

SQUIRREL

The Squirrel skins used in coats are from Russian and Siberian squirrels. The better specimens are medium steel blue in color. The paler, streaked furs are less expensive. The lighter shades are frequently dyed many different colors.


U.S.
CHOICE
STEER

Facts on Meat Grading

Testifying before the General Welfare Committee of the New York City Council, when an ordinance proposing to make mandatory the quality grading and stamping of beef, lamb, and mutton was up for consideration, a representative of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural Economics gave a carefully prepared statement which completely covers the subject of meat grading.

So that other consumers can have their questions about this Government service answered, the *Consumers' Guide* has taken the statement and rewritten it as it might have been given during a Consumers' Question and Answer Hour.

What Federal agency grades meats?

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture.

By what authority is this service maintained?

The authority for the Bureau to establish grades and to conduct a grading service is found in the annual Appropriation Act for the Department of Agriculture.

When did the Bureau first begin to offer a grading service?

Prior to the establishment of a grading service the Department of Agriculture was authorized by Congress to acquire and diffuse useful information on the grading and marketing of farm products.

In 1916 Congress authorized the Department to investigate and report market conditions and prices for livestock and meats by grades.

Later Congress authorized the Department to conduct a grading service. Specifically Congress authorized the Department to "investigate and certify to shippers and other interested parties, the class, quality, and condition of perishable farm products" and to "promote the use of uniform standards of classifications. . . ."

What is the purpose of meat grading?

Its purpose is to facilitate the marketing of meats and therefore livestock at their true commercial values. The market value of graded livestock is determined by the market value of graded meats. The retail price of meat is what consumers will pay for it. Rewhat consumers will pay for it. Retailers pay wholesale prices on the basis of their estimation of what consumers will pay them. In turn, the prices meat packers pay farmers for livestock are determined by what they can receive from the retailer or the jobber. Thus livestock prices are set finally by the prices consumers pay for meats.

But consumers want to know what quality of meat they get for their money. They are willing to pay higher prices for quality meat, and insist they should get low quality meat at a lower price.

By grading livestock and meat, it is possible for farmers to get more nearly the value of their products as determined by their eventual selling price.

Grades, therefore, facilitate selection, pricing, and trading in meats and livestock.

Since they also enable the producers of good quality products to obtain higher prices, they encourage the development of better strains of livestock.

Of what advantage are grades to consumers?

They protect consumers against misrepresentation of quality.

They enable consumers to buy the most economical meat that suits their purposes.

They enable consumers to make intelligent price comparisons.

They are an assurance to consumers they are purchasing the quality of meat that they want.

What standards does the Bureau of Agricultural Economics use in grading meat and livestock?

It uses the official standards of the United States which are promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture.

In what form are the results of a grading service shown?

Meat is stamped the whole length of the carcass with harmless purple vegetable ink. But in addition the owner of the meat is issued an official certificate.

What does the certificate say?

It details the kind, class, grade, and condition of the meat or livestock inspected, with the approximate weight of the products examined and passed upon.

How are these certificates regarded by courts?

By law these certificates are accepted in all courts of the United States as *prima facie* evidence of the truth of all statements made in the certificates.

What interest do consumers have in these certificates?

None. Certificates are used in the marketing of livestock and meats before they reach the consumer.

Then how do consumers know whether the meat they buy is graded?

By the purple grading stamp which runs down the entire length of a graded carcass.

How does the stamp read?

A quality stamp on a high grade steer will read: "U.S. Choice Steer B.A.E."

When did grading and stamping of beef for consumer information begin?

In 1927 this service was inaugurated on an experimental basis.

Who requested this service?

The Better Beef Association, an association of livestock producers.

Why?

The cattlemen believed that grading and branding the better grades of beef would stimulate consumer demand for better quality beef; at the same time the stamps protected consumers against deception and substitution.

Was this experimental period successful?

Yes, after a one-year experimental and demonstration period in which meats were graded free of charge, grading was placed upon a permanent self-supporting basis. This was in July of 1928.

How was it made self-supporting?

The service of a U.S. meat grader was offered to all financially interested parties in certain designated markets at $2.00 an hour for the time actually used in grading.

Did the switch from a free basis to a paid basis affect the volume of meat grading?

On the contrary the service grew until, 10 years after the service was placed on a voluntary fee basis, it was grading 16 times as much meat as on the old free basis.

When the service was launched, did the Department simply promulgate the grades and standards?

Absolutely not. When the grades were prepared, drafts of grade descriptions were sent to retailers, packers, wholesalers, livestock interests, and to everyone else who displayed an interest in meat grades. The grades took into account principles and practices employed in the trade and they included the customary trade terms that were understood nationally.

What are the primary characteristics used as a basis for grades?

They are conformation, finish, and quality.

Conformation, which is given a weight of 25 percent in determining the grade, refers to the general build or shape and the relative meatiness of a carcass or cut. This is influenced by the breed of the animal.

Finish, which is given a weight of 25 percent, refers to the thickness, amount, color, quality, and distribution of the fat. This includes not only the surface fat, but also the deposits of fat between and within the large muscles and along the connective tissue and muscle fiber. This factor is determined by the feeding of the animal.

Quality, with a weight of 50 percent, reflects the consumer's desire for satisfaction in meats. It refers to the character of the flesh and the fat, muscular development, marbling, color of the lean, apparent strength of fibre and hardness of bone, texture, grain, firmness, dryness, and juiciness of the flesh, and other characteristics which are related to palatability.

How wide is the quality range within a grade?

To be practical a grade must not contain too great a quality range. It is believed present grades meet this practical requirement. It is possible, however, to establish sub-divisions if this should ever become necessary.

How wide are price ranges within grades?

Since there is a small range in quality, with a grade, there is sometimes a small price range within a grade. It is very narrow, however, and for the most part meats of the same grade in the same locality, marketed in similar ways, will sell for the same price.

What are the qualifications of Federal meat graders?

Federal meat graders are selected by competitive examination through the United States Civil Service Commission. To qualify for a position as a Federal meat grader, applicants must have 6 years of responsible experience in the grading, selling, or buying of meats in large wholesale quantities.

After appointment graders are trained by the Federal Government. Each grader is made familiar with the Federal system of grading, and with the policies and objectives of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. He is taught to be prompt, efficient, and courteous, and to do his work fearlessly and impartially. If for any reason, during the 6 months probationary training period given each grader, he fails to come up to standard he is dropped.

The average length of service for the present staff of graders in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics is 15 years. Their annual salaries range from $2600 to $3800.

Is there any check on the grading done by meat graders?

Within the Bureau of Agricultural Economics the work of the Federal meat graders is constantly checked by the general supervisor in charge of the meat grading station. In addition there is a grading supervisor at each market where more than one grader is employed, and he is responsible directly to the Washington office. He not only grades but works as a check or test grader. It is his responsibility to review the work of the graders, to interpret and supervise the application of Federal meat standards.

Is there any other check outside the meat grading service?

Yes, graded meat is constantly being shipped from the point of origin to markets. Where the grading is improper, naturally the purchaser at the point of delivery will protest since the price he pays for meat is based upon the official U.S. Grade.

How can a meat dealer appeal for regrading?

Anyone having a financial interest in Federally graded meats may appeal for regrading.

Do the number of appeals indicate that there is general satisfaction with the meat grading service?

From July 1, 1937 to May 31, 1938 only 113,000 pounds of graded beef were appealed for regrading. This amounted to only one-third of one percent of the total amount of beef graded.

How much does it cost to grade beef per pound?

An average of about one-fiftieth of a cent per pound.

Does grading meat as medium, plain, cutter, low cutter, or cull, kill the market for that meat?

Not at all. The demand for the grading and stamping of medium grade beef has increased during the last few years. In Seattle where compulsory grading has been in effect since 1934 meats are regularly sold under these grade names.

How many applicants are there for the voluntary grading of meats?

Grading services for large wholesale quantities of meat are regularly furnished to more than 500 applicants throughout the United States.

Do concerns that use the grading service continue it?

The history of the service in general has been that those who try it continue to use it.

Can beef which is slaughtered in accordance with ritual be graded?

Yes. If the users of ritually slaughtered beef request it, a satisfactory and economic grading system can be devised to meet their needs.

Do standards and grades change so frequently that they inconvenience dealers?

No, the official standards have not been changed in any material respect since they were first promulgated in 1927.

Do Federal grades tell consumers anything about the relative nutritive values of different meats?

The relative nutritional value of meats is not considered in grading. It is true that the food values of fat and lean meat are different. Grades do reflect differences in the amount and quality of fat present. To this degree there may be some difference in nutritive value between grades. Lean meat in any grade has the same food value as the lean meat in any other grade. Grades are intended to reflect differences in palatability and tenderness, not in nutritional values.

What cities have passed ordinances requiring the grading of meat?

Schenectady, N. Y., and Seattle, Washington.

Has grading been successful in these two cities?

The requirement that only graded meats be sold has been decidedly satisfactory in Seattle and still continues. In Schenectady the plan has been abandoned.

Was there any difference in the way meat grading was undertaken in these two cities?

Yes. In Seattle meat grading is done by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics with the help of three assistants furnished by the city. The city in this instance is in the same position as any other voluntary applicant for the meat grading service. In Schenectady the city selected its own meat graders and the work had only the occasional supervision of the Bureau.

How is compulsory meat grading regarded in Seattle?

Practically all hotel and restaurant operators are in favor of the ordinance, and most dealers and consumers are reported to favor it.

Has compulsory meat grading in Seattle had any effect on prices there?

Bureau of Agricultural Economics' records of prices by grades in Seattle do not show that any class or grade of beef or lamb has been adversely affected because of grading.

When a city requires that only Federally graded meats be sold, how is the cost of grading paid for?

The Federal meat grading service is financed in part through funds appropriated by Congress and in part through a cooperative arrangement with the National Live Stock and Meat Board. Under the arrangement all fees for grading meats are paid into a special meat grading fund set up in the Board's treasury from which the salaries and expenses of the meat grading service are paid. If your city should pass an ordinance requiring Federal meat grading, a charge of $2 an hour would be collected for the time of the grader from the person, firm, or corporation to which his service is rendered. This money would be paid into the treasury of the National Live Stock and Meat Board and would be used to finance the service. The meat grading service is not conducted for profit and the charges assessed approximately equal the costs of the service.

If I should want a demonstration or an explanation of the meat grading service in my city, could this be arranged?

Yes, it is the policy of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics to conduct grading demonstrations to interested groups and persons. Such a demonstration may be arranged by writing to the nearest office of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Addresses of these offices may be obtained by writing directly to that Bureau in the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the *Consumers' Guide.*

What groups have asked for such demonstrations?

The Bureau has conducted such demonstrations before producers, packers, jobbers, retailers, colleges, dieticians, schools, consumer organizations, city, county and State officials, statisticians, magazine officials, newspapers, economists, and others.

Are You in the Market for an Electric Range?

Experts who have none to sell tell you how to select wisely, but first they caution: Look to your budget!

BEFORE going to market to buy an electric range, check with your neighbors who already own them. It will help you to make a wise decision.

Anyone who has used an electric range in a yearly round of meal-getting knows which features she likes and which ones she doesn't. She knows from first-hand experience if the surface units and oven on her range are satisfactory; if the parts wear well or if they have to be replaced often; if new parts are expensive; and if repair service is reasonable and accessible.

Tales your neighbors tell will help you to decide what features to look for when selecting a stove. Of course, we take it for granted that before seeking advice you have had an honest session with your budget. Electric ranges appeal to every housewife. They are easy to keep clean; they provide a measured and controlled heat, the production of which is not affected by atmospheric conditions or drafts; and, if their ovens are well insulated, electric ranges have that big advantage of not heating up the kitchen excessively. But—and this is why the budget session is so important—electric ranges usually cost more than ranges which have the same general features but use other types of fuel.

Installation costs sometimes are steep and, in communities where the electric rate is high, ranges are costly to operate. They cannot be installed on a lighting circuit. The National Electric code lays down definite specifications for range installations. Charges for installing sometimes are borne by the consumer, sometimes by the power company. Farmers frequently have to pay for bringing the wires in from the main line. This may make installation costs very high.

● COST OF OPERATING an electric range depends on the wattage of the heating units, the type and amount of insulation, the type and amount of cooking to be done, the care shown in operating the range, the kind of utensils used, and finally—and most importantly—the local rate for electricity.

Average monthly consumption of electricity for ranges only, in 54 of the large cities of the Nation—according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics—was 111.3 kilowatt hours in 1937. At 3 cents per kilowatt hour, the cost of operation for a month would be $3.34. When the kilowatt hour rate is 5 cents, the bill jumps to $5.57.

Your budget may not stand such an item just for fuel for cooking. In investigating the cost of operating an electric range, you may find that rates are lowered when an electric range is installed in the home. In some cases, this reduction is made only on the current used by the range. In other cases, the reduced rate covers all the current used in the home.

Electric ranges are manufactured by many companies and each company makes a variety of models. So dazzling an array of models appears on the market today, household buyers beholding it must be filled with "h'admiration h'amounting to h'awe." How to select from among the many the one best suited to your pocketbook and your purposes, puts more than a tax on your powers of admiration.

● NO GOVERNMENT STANDARDS of quality—such as there are for some food products—exist to lead the way. Some of the desirable features of electric ranges for household use are described in a pamphlet (not for general distribution, but available

for reference at local offices) by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, a Federal Government agency. Tests, to determine whether ranges offered for sale to the Federal Government measure up to specifications, are made by the National Bureau of Standards. From these examinations, from the work of experiment stations, and the research done by commercial firms, there may emerge—sometime in the future—standards to guide consumers unskilled in the mysteries of electrical equipment.

With adequate standards drawn up by experts to describe in a few simple terms the good or bad features of the range they select, consumers would not need to try to become range experts themselves. For the present, however, there is no alternative but to study some general pointers to value. To study and use these general clues is better than going at it blind, but not so good as buying under recognized standards.

One standard of safety exists, and the wise consumer learns about it first. Look for a range that has been listed as approved by the National Board of Fire Underwriters. Approval by that Board means that the range answers certain requirements that make it safe from fire hazard.

● TYPE AND SIZE of range you choose depends on the bulge in your pocketbook, the size and shape of the space where you intend to install it, and the amount and kind of cooking you do. Box, console, and buffet—you can get ranges in any one of these shapes. The box type has the oven directly below the surface unit. In the console type the oven is raised either to the left or right of the cooking surface. Whether you want the oven on the right or left side depends on the space and the light arrangement in your kitchen. A range should always be placed so that there is direct light on the surface units.

CHECK with your electric power company or cooperative on the rate charged for current used by a stove. A lower rate, cutting the cost of operating a stove, may be a deciding factor on whether you can afford to buy one.

The big advantage of the console range is that you can look into your oven while standing erect. You lose this advantage but gain another in the buffet type, the style now in vogue. In the buffet range the cooking surface and the top of the oven are on the same plane. That means that when stirring up your breads and biscuits you can use the top of the oven as a table, but when you put them in the oven you will have to squat or stoop.

● CONSIDER these 5 parts of any type of electric range before you buy it—the frame and the exterior surface; the oven; the surface units; the switches; and the appliance outlets.

Durable cast iron and welded steel are the materials that frames are usually made of, as these provide the necessary rigidity. Some ranges extend entirely to the floor and are set flush to the walls; others have legs. These legs should be firmly attached to the frame by lock washers on the leg screws so they add rather than detract from the frame's rigidity. Joints should be well-rounded and tightly fitted together.

Most electric ranges designed for the home are finished in porcelain enamel, which is easy to clean. In examining the enamel parts of the stove be sure the finish is smooth and glossy, free from depressions and ripples, black dots and hair lines. If the top is covered with enamel, it should be the acid resisting kind.

Trim of the range is often enamel, sometimes chromium plate, monel metal or a composition material. Black enamel, rather than white or colored, is more practical for trim at seams as it chips less easily. Metal plating for trim is more decorative than essential.

UNTIL standards of quality for ranges are developed, consumers have no choice but to become range experts themselves, if they wish to spend their money wisely and economically. Aiding them in this task are an increasing number of home economists who conduct tests of the efficiency of designs and devices in this very modern household instrument.

Be sure that the oven door fits tightly. If it doesn't, you will be paying for heat that is escaping into the room. It also means uneven baking. If there is a space around the oven door, the front of the oven will be much cooler than the back. Door and frame of the oven should be such a perfect fit that you would have difficulty in latching the door if a piece of cardboard $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch thick is held between the door and the frame.

● TIGHT CONSTRUCTION is all-important in an electric oven. Electricity, unlike other fuels, does not need to be burned in the presence of oxygen, so a flow of air into the oven is not necessary. Heat is supplied by a heating element placed directly inside the oven. The heat is distributed largely by radiation. The efficiency with which the heat is retained in the oven depends on the material and the construction of the door, the outer walls, the insulation and the lining of the oven.

Ovens should be well insulated throughout, whether thickly or lightly. Materials used for insulation are dead air spaces, asbestos, or mineral wool, either in bulk or pressed into sheets between layers of netting. Blanket insulation—where the material is all in one piece and is wrapped around the oven—is best. Knock against the top, sides and door of the oven. A hollow sound means little or no insulation in that part. A surer way to determine the presence or absence of insulation is to ask the salesman to unscrew the inside of the oven door. You can then get a graphic idea of the insulating material used, its thickness, and whether or not the insulation will hold its position.

● IF YOU GO IN FOR ROASTS, puddings, and beans that take a long time baking, then you want a well insulated oven. If you are a cook who uses an oven only for short periods—say, just for biscuits, cookies, and broiling—then an oven with a fair amount of insulation may be adequate to your needs. Here's the reason: The heavier the insulation the more time and fuel it takes to pre-heat the oven. But because a heavily insulated oven holds heat better and loses less heat into the room it costs less for long-time baking. An oven with a fair amount of insulation heats up faster. Thus it is cheaper to operate for short-time baking.

Lining covering the insulation material should be a durable rust-resisting material which is smooth in finish and if possible, seamless in construction. Some experts hold that if there is a seam in the lining it should be at the top, rather than on the bottom, of the oven. Most domestic ranges are lined with sheet steel or cast iron, finished with porcelain enamel or chromium plate. Deluxe models sometimes have monel metal or stainless steel linings. The shiny bright surface of these materials makes for efficient heat distribution and fuel economy—but they are expensive. Chromium plating is also costly. An oven lined with enamel takes a little more fuel to pre-heat and the distribution of heat is slightly less efficient than is the case with one lined in a bright metal. However, porcelain enamel is much easier to clean than a metal surface. Dark enamel is to be preferred to other colors. It does not chip as readily.

Ovens may be equipped with one or 2 heating units. In the one-unit ovens, broiling may be done under the unit which is usually from 4 to 6 inches from the bottom of the stove, or in a separate compartment. In a 2-unit oven, the top unit is used for broiling and the bottom for baking.

Many variations are found in these types of construction. Some experts hold that the one-unit oven is as efficient as the two. Others disagree. There is no conclusive rule to guide the homemaker in her decision here.

To prevent warping, the heating coils should be mounted on rigid frames.

The baffle, a piece of sheet metal, over the lower unit of your oven helps to deflect the heat radiated from the heating element and to distribute the heat evenly.

Side racks and shelves in the oven should be made of sturdy rust resistant metals which will not warp or sag. If they are removable it's a big advantage to the housewife, as they are then easier to clean.

Oven linings should be vaportight as well as airtight. When moisture seeps between the inner and outer linings of the stove it may damage the insulation and cause the metal parts to rust. Ovens are provided with vents to take off the excess gas and steam developed in the use of the oven. The opening in the lining for the vent or for any other gadget should be fitted with airtight bushings to prevent leakage. The vent should be so placed that the hot vapor will not flow against and stain the kitchen walls.

● THERMOSTATS to control oven temperatures are part of the standard equipment of electric ranges. They maintain a uniform temperature at any degree for which they are set. The current goes on, as well as off, mechanically. Thermostats should be checked after purchase to be sure they are correctly adjusted to represent accurately average oven temperatures.

Heat indicators are extra but useful gadgets. They have nothing to do with controlling the heat of the oven, but they record the temperature within the oven at all times. The accuracy of heat indicators depends on where they are located and their calibration with reference to the heat in the oven center.

Another extra on modern stoves is the automatic time control. When you have one of these clocks you can put your roast in the oven at the crack of dawn, setting the hand of the clock marked "on" for 3 p. m. and the hand marked "off" for 6 p. m. The current will go on and off by itself. For the stay-at-home wife, a time control clock is probably a luxury, but for the one with a job, it might be of great value. For the absent-minded cook the "minute-minder" is a useful device. Less expensive than the time control clock, it can be set at any time a dish is expected to be done and will ring an alarm when that time is reached.

You'll find when you look at different models of electric ranges that you won't have much choice in size of ovens. Most of them are 17 to 19 inches deep, 14, 16 or 18 inches wide and 14 or 15 inches high. From 3 to 5 inches of that height are usually lost working space because of the heating units. Many housewives find that pans and casseroles which fitted into the oven of the gas or wood stove are too high to enable them to place pans on both racks during one baking in an electric oven. If one does much baking then investment in shallow baking dishes is a real economy. One of the tricks in cutting down one's electric bill is to do as much baking as possible when the oven is hot. Experiments have shown that preheating the oven costs at least three times as much as bringing foods to the boil on a 1,000-watt unit on top of the range. Operating an oven for an hour after it is preheated costs from 1½ to 2 times as much as using low wattage of a 1,000-watt unit for an hour.

● SURFACE cooking units are the next features to be examined. There are two kinds: open and closed. In the open unit the coils are exposed; in the closed unit they are covered with metal. In general, initial cost and the replacement of parts of the enclosed unit is more expensive but its life is longer. Closed units have the advantage of being easier to clean. With open units, don't be tempted to start digging out spilled food while the current is on. You may get a bad shock and blow out the fuse. If food is spilled, continue cooking until the spilled food is charred, then when the current has been turned off and the stove has been allowed to cool, use a soft brush to sweep away the charred food.

Almost every stove manufacturer makes both an open and closed unit.

[*Concluded on page 23*]

ONE of the tricks in cutting down on the cost of operating an electric range is to do as much baking as possible when the oven is hot.

The Battle of the Markets

*We follow the tortuous routes fresh fruits and vegetables take through city wholesale markets in this fifth lap of a consumer commodity tour**

FRUIT and vegetable expresses get a clear track to consumer markets. Even passenger trains are shunted onto sidings when the fruit and vegetable train whistle screams. And no passenger dismounting from the crack express ever got so much attention as the fruit and vegetable passengers on the fruit express.

For New York—consumption or distributing point for one out of every 10 carloads of fresh fruits and vegetables in the country—cars from the South and West land in Jersey City yards to be nudged onto piers. Then a final push rolls them on the track-lined decks of a river float which crosses to the other bank lashed to a tug boat.

Beginning at about 7 o'clock in the evening, sweating men in gangs break open the cars, let the first rush of ice-laden air escape, and then brushing aside the crushed ice, they pull, tug, haul, and carry crates from the floats over planked bridges to huge display rooms on the piers. Here at one o'clock in the morning, the fruit and vegetable dealers—dressed in linen dusters that look like Mother Hubbard aprons—begin to sell their produce. They sell chiefly to jobbers, who in turn haul to secondary retail markets located all over the city.

Peddlers run in and out of groups of jobbers, looking for an over supply of some fruit or vegetable, keeping an eye out for a carload of something that might perish over night unless it is sold immediately. They take up the slack in the market and help fill the slack in the diets of many New Yorkers. They buy and sell cheap. Wholesalers are grateful to peddlers for often, if they did not buy, the stuff would spoil. Peddlers take the third rate stuff, the damaged crates, the broken lots, the strawberries that over-

Earlier stages of this tour were described in the following issues: April 11, May 9, and July 1938.

stayed their season. These they lug to wagons and thence to pushcarts which later will be parked on crowded tenement-lined streets. Altogether, 14 thousand peddlers sell 25 percent of the perishable food stuffs sold in New York. For New York they nevertheless furnish an emergency sluice that channels the overflow of fruits and vegetables down streets and into homes that otherwise would not get as many fruits and vegetables to eat. Rows of pushcarts laden with perishable foods are often unsightly additions to overcrowded thoroughfares. They complicate the health problems of slum areas. Cities do well to provide more orderly and sanitary arrangements for pushcart vendors when, in addition, they do not curtail the service of these little merchants, nor remove them from close proximity to the families dependent on them, nor charge for space which city streets now provide free.

● BY EIGHT O'CLOCK, the city is awake and a hundred thousand distributors of perishable foodstuffs in New York City are back at their stores, at their pushcarts, at their stands. Then more orderly, more dignified, auction sales begin back at the wholesale markets. Most citrus fruit is sold at auction. The auctioned fruits themselves are not hauled in the auction rooms where the buyers gather. Instead, samples selected at random from the shipments are displayed in the great covered piers for buyers' inspection. Then, before the bidders enter a separate auction room, a catalog of the fruits for sale that day is placed in each bidder's hand. Represented at the auction is an agent of the grower cooperative, or shipper for whom the produce is being sold. Bidding is fast, but the auctioneer knows the people who are buying and he knows the market. For that matter, so does everyone there. Selling usually goes smoothly. The day's price is soon found, and most buyers pay it. Toward noon, the market may sag some if there is a lot of fruit in, but growers' representatives then withdraw the fruits from sale; or if there are less than carlots left, the peddlers get a crack at them. Just as in the regular market, they clean up.

The Federal Trade Commission found in its 1935 study of the fruit and vegetable business that "Fourteen fruit auction companies operate in 12 terminal markets of the United States. A large shipper, ... through subsidiaries and individuals, owns an interest in 5 of these companies, and in 3 cases its interest is large.

"Approximately 75 percent of the oranges, 58 percent of the grapes, and 30 percent of the apples sold in terminal auction markets in 1935 were sold through fruit auction companies. The auction method is more favorable for well-known brands of fruits having a standard pack and quality which are marketed over a long period of time. . . . . The trade generally appears to favor the auction method of selling although criticism of the auctions were expressed. . . .

"Unless the ownership of such auction companies is sufficiently dispersed among sellers as well as buyers," the Commission observes, "the possibilities for control to the detriment of patrons is great." It then suggests that States and municipalities might well consider requiring the periodical publication of the ownership of fruit auction companies, and using the public powers to prevent abuses resulting from the lack of impartial administration of these companies.

● MEASURED BY THE CENTS in city consumers' fruit and vegetable dollars, these valuable foods frequently have gone only two-thirds of their journey toward consumers when they land on the piers. They may have been 6 months in the growing, and 2,000 miles in the coming. They may have only another 5 miles to go to reach consumers' kitchens. In cost, from pier to consumers, they still have one-third of the way to go.

A look at the confusion on the pier, and at New York's Washington Street Market, or Philadelphia's Dock Street, or many a similar market in other large cities, and a look at the tangle of trucks and people, the piles of boxes, and the debris, explains part of the mystery of final costs. Despite the confusion and noise and congestion, 200,000 carloads of fruits and vegetables passed through the markets

NEW YORK CITY has taken a hand in untangling the confusion and lessening the congestion of its antiquated wholesale fruit and vegetable markets. In the Bronx, it has built this Terminal Market where both trucks and freight cars can be unloaded. Dealers, however, have been reluctant to abandon their old haunts for this modern, up-to-date, terminal market.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE cars from the South and West cross the Hudson River from New Jersey on tracklined river floats to these piers on the Manhattan side of the river.

A CARLOAD of oranges is about to be knocked down to this dealer at the New York Fruit Auction. The fruit, however, never actually appears at the auction. Instead, the buyers examine samples of the fruit before entering the sales, and then, at the sales, they bid from printed catalogs.

of New York in 1936. For all the jostling and clamor in Washington Street, a thousand carloads of fruits and vegetables pass that way in the night.

But it is expensive. Crates of lettuce are piled upon the piers in New York. A jobber whose stand is in Washington Market—3 blocks away—buys 20 crates of the lettuce from a carlot receiver. The jobber has his own truck, and it is waiting off the pier. To get the lettuce on his truck, however, it must be hauled off the pier in a truck belonging to a member of the Truckers' Association. Some yards distant, the crates are unloaded, and then loaded again on the jobber's truck, to be hauled 3 more blocks to the sidewalk beside the market. In the next few hours the lettuce will be sold to retailers who haul it away to their grocery stores. In its last 5-mile journey, from pier to store, the lettuce is thus loaded and unloaded 5 or 6 times. It costs 5 cents to move a box of apples off the pier; asparagus costs from 6 to 12 cents a unit; berries cost from 8 to 12½ cents a crate; lettuce costs 10 cents a crate.

"Monopolistic and racketeering practices in the carting of fruits and vegetables exist in several of the larger terminal markets, particularly in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago," the Federal Trade Commission reports. "In New York and Chicago the truckers, with the assistance of the teamsters' union have obtained a monopoly of the commercial hauling of fruits and vegetables from the principal terminals by excluding all trucks not members of the truckers' association or whose drivers do not belong to the local union."

Union members, jobbers and carlot receivers for the most part are as anxious to be rid of racketeers as are the consumers who must pay for them, and the farmers who lose by them, but unfortunately they are caught in a marketing situation over which they have little control.

● SPOTTING ONE of the causes for racketeering and the cost of getting fruits and vegetables from pier to consumer, the Federal Trade Commission says, "although many of the facilities have been modernized, (in the large terminal markets) there has been marked lack of scientific planning. In a number of these markets, the market districts have remained substantially the same for many years and present generally unsatisfactory conditions, including excessive traffic congestion, prolonged hours of sale, opportunity for monopolistic control, especially in city trucking and excessive costs of distribution. Practical difficulties, such as the necessity for capital outlays, trade inertia and conflicting individual interests, have prevented or deterred the establishment of proper regulations and improvements of facilities within many cities."

Nine railroads and 49 steamship lines deliver fruits and vegetables into New York. For the railroads, there are 57 freight stations at which cars can be unloaded. For the boats there are docks and piers at which they can unload. But from 1929 to 1935 fruit and vegetable shipments by motor truck increased from 13 to 34 percent of the fruit and vegetable total for New York City. Shipments by boat

and rail declined from 87 percent to 66 percent. Sixty five thousand carloads of fruits and vegetables were delivered into New York in 1935 by motor truck. And a good part of them went to Washington Street, a narrow congested one-way street, originally a street of brownstone residences, but transformed by its proximity to the docks into America's largest and most congested market.

Philadelphia has 2 large terminals which duplicate each other without quite meeting every marketing problem. Fruits and vegetables arriving by boat, for example, must be loaded into railroad cars and hauled to the rail terminals where they are auctioned off. On the other hand, produce is frequently hauled from the terminals to another market at a cost of $30 per car.

Chicago recently completed a modern produce market with a splendid truck terminal, but no freight terminal. Since most of Chicago's fruits and vegetables get there by train, fruits and vegetables must be loaded on trucks at the freight terminals and hauled to the South Water Market and again unloaded for sale. Hauling back and forth helps the trucking business and needlessly inflates prices to consumers.

Competition between railroads sometimes confuses the marketing problem, as in Philadelphia, Buffalo, Detroit, and Los Angeles, where competing railroads have built 2 terminals. One would have been enough, and the duplication is a headache for buyers who must trek back and forth and use twice as much time for marketing as they would use were there only one terminal. In Cleveland, the railroads cooperated in building a huge new union terminal, but for some reason the tracks fall 100 feet short of the market. Produce must be trucked this distance at an additional eventual cost to consumers.

With 9 railroads each operating their own terminals in New York, a condition has come about such that no one railroad uses its facilities to the best advantage. For example, one has rented 3 piers covering 9½ acres, with a capacity of 700 carloads a day. It actually handles an average of only 95 carloads a day. These 95 carloads of fruits and vegetables then carry the cost burden of a terminal designed for 700 carloads.

● NO ONE CAN DIVE into the confusion of wholesale produce markets and come up with anywhere near a close estimate of how much more present marketing facilities and so-called system cost the consumer than they should. But one study indicates that if two New York terminals were combined the saving in rent alone would amount to $3.00 a car. Reductions on handling costs would bring this saving to $5.00 a car. When the Commissioner of Markets in New York City followed 6 vegetables in small packages around the city, he learned that handling them cost from 17 to 27 cents in terminal transportation charges alone. He estimated that savings of 2 to 12 cents were possible without any drastic changes at all, simply by eliminating some of the unnecessary hauling.

Pressure from farmers and consumers for more efficient handling of these essential foods leads in two directions. The first envisions the establishment of huge regional markets like the recently developed Capitol City Regional Market in the vicinity of Albany, New York. This market covers 25 acres. It serves an area in which 650,000 people live. It has facilities for farmers, for trucks, for rail, and for water. Here it is hoped wholesalers, farmers, and retailers may meet in one market.

The other approach toward marketing problems is sketched by the Federal Trade Commission, an approach by law, by regulation, and by publicity. The Federal Government, it says, should, "through the Department of Agriculture be authorized and directed to cooperate with municipalities in studying each of the principal terminal markets, in formulating laws and administrative rules and regulations to which the operations of such markets should conform, and, where necessary, in planning for the establishment of such additional facilities and such methods of terminal market operation as may be needed." And further, it recommends, the Department of Agriculture should publish reports of unsatisfactory terminal market conditions or facilities in any locality.

Picking up the challenge where the Federal Trade Commission dropped it, the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural Economics has already begun to publicize unsatisfactory terminal market conditions. The challenge of securing efficient fruit and vegetable marketing is now in consumers' laps.

DEALERS in broken lots, surpluses, and inferior grades—the pushcart salesmen are low-cost distributors to low-income families. They create hygienic problems as well as provide an economic service. Reducing health hazards without curtailing the services of these little merchants is the problem facing cities today.

YOUR FOOD SUPPLIES AND COSTS

HIGHLIGHTS

Record supplies of canned string beans and canned green peas are in prospect for the 1938–1939 season.

Pears, figs, and plums usually are most plentiful in September

Supplies of grapefruit juice are large and prices are relatively low.

Average price of white bread has remained practically unchanged for 13 months, despite lower bread ingredient costs.

Dried bean supplies during the 1938–1939 season probably will be about as large as the record supplies in the season just ended.

ALL FOODS Retail food costs declined slightly (0.2 percent) from June to July. This minor drop was the result of a sharp reduction in prices of fresh vegetables, principally potatoes, which more than balanced advances in prices of butter, eggs, and all meats, except poultry.

Food items in the typical market basket of a workingman's family cost 80 cents in July, compared with an average retail cost of $1.00 in the 3-year period 1923–1925. The same amount of food retailed at 86 cents last July, 68 cents in July 1932, and $1.06 in July 1929.

Outlook for food supplies and prices during the last half of 1938 compared with 1937 is quite favorable for consumers. The general level of food costs probably will continue under its 1937 level. Larger amounts of butter, cheese, poultry, lamb, sweetpotatoes, rice, pears, quick frozen fruits and vegetables, dried prunes, wheat, canned peas, and canned snap beans are in prospect. Substantial increase in hog supplies is expected, starting in October. Partly offsetting these increases will be smaller amounts of apples, grapes, eggs, potatoes, almonds, walnuts, canned tomatoes, canned corn, and most canned fruits.

MEATS Meat prices appear to be close to their peak for 1938. Ordinarily, the cost of meats in general reaches its high point in August or September. This year the cost of meats as a group has gone up 10 percent since early February. Advances have occurred principally in beef steaks, fresh pork, and lamb chops. While meat costs were 8 percent under their relatively high level of 1937, they were higher than in any other July since 1930. Lamb and beef prices usually commence to decline in August but the downswing in fresh pork does not start until the latter part of September or October.

LAMB Supplies probably will be more plentiful than a year ago in view of a record size lamb crop. From August through November, supplies consist mainly of grass-fed lambs. Those in best condition are slaughtered, while the others are retained for feeding on grains and are marketed after November as grain-fed lambs. The extent of the increase in supplies over a year earlier during the next few months will depend upon the number retained for further feeding.

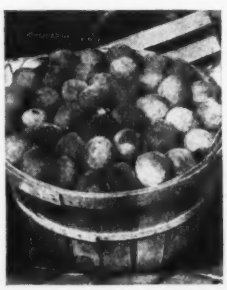
Retail prices reached their highest level for 1938 during July. Sharp increases, however, were limited to chops and chucks.

HOGS Seasonal increase in supply and downswing in prices is not expected to begin until late September or early October when pigs from this spring's crop start moving to market. Total supplies (current slaughter plus storage stocks) until the beginning of October probably will be about the same as in 1937, but after that month a sharp increase is in prospect. Prices during the next few months most likely will continue under their 1937 level.

Pork prices to consumers advanced further from June to July, with the sharpest increases in fresh cuts. Prices of ham and fresh pork cuts reached new high levels for this year, but lard and bacon prices were below their early 1938 peak levels. Compared with a year ago, pork cuts were lower by the following amounts per pound: fresh pork 5½ cents, lard and bacon 4 cents, and ham 2½ cents.

BEEF Advance in prices of better grade cattle during the late summer and early fall may be larger than was expected earlier this year. But prices most likely will remain lower than a year ago, in view of larger supplies. Generally prices of lower grade cattle start going down at this time of the year. The decline this year may not be very large, because farmers most likely will retain some cows and heifers for the restocking of herds.

Retail beef prices also reached new high points for the year. From June to July steaks went up 2 cents a pound, while roasts advanced about 1¼ cents.



Usually during the hot summer months steak prices go up faster than prices of roasts, because of a shift in demand to cuts which require less time for cooking. Retail beef prices have gone up from 2 to 7 cents a pound since February, but were about the same amount under last July.

DAIRY PRODUCTS Outlook for butter remains unchanged, and during the last half of 1938 supplies still are expected to be much larger than last year. Retail prices have changed but little during the past three months and only a relatively small increase is in prospect during the remainder of 1938. In July prices to consumers were one cent a pound above June, but 5½ cents a pound under a year ago.

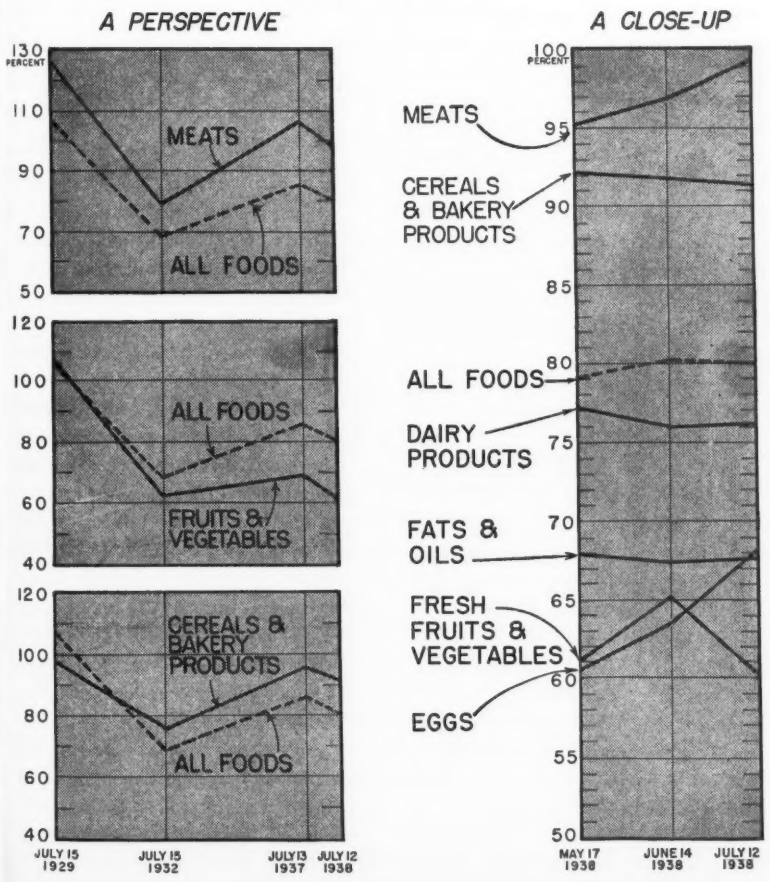
FRESH FRUITS Valencia oranges continue to retail at relatively low prices. In July they were 15 cents a dozen under last year's relatively high level.

A record size pear crop, slightly larger than last year's big crop, is in prospect for 1938. Bulk of pear shipments comes from the Pacific Coast States. Pears generally are picked when immature, and ripened at markets in cool, dark rooms. Good quality pears are fairly firm but not hard, free from blemish, clean and not misshapen. Color is not a complete test for maturity since some varieties are in prime condition when green or greenish yellow, while other varieties may be yellow but still immature.

Grape and apple shipments usually increase until they reach their peak in October. Seedless varieties comprise the bulk of early grape shipments. California produces about nine-tenths of annual grape supplies. The grape crop is about a tenth smaller than last year's big crop, while total apple production is expected to be one-third less than the large 1937 crop. Retail apple prices in mid-July were about 1½ cents a pound less than a year ago.

CHANGES IN RETAIL FOOD COSTS

(1923-1925=100)



FRESH VEGETABLES Cabbage, celery, onion, and potato shipments from the late producing States usually start in August and reach their peak in October or November. Prices usually move down until they hit bottom in these months. About one-third of annual celery supplies, half of annual cabbage supplies and about three-fourths of commercial potato and onion supplies come from these States. A part of each of these crops is placed in storage and marketed during the late winter and early spring months. The late potato crop is expected to be only slightly smaller than last year's big crop. Acreage planted to late cabbage and onions is slightly larger than a year ago.

Retail prices of most fresh vegetables dropped sharply from June to July with decreases in some cases amounting to 20 to 30 percent. Major exceptions were lettuce and spinach, which many times advance in price at this time of the year. Marked reductions carried prices of cabbage, carrots, green beans, celery, and onions to the lowest level reached this year.

EGGS A more than usual increase in egg prices through November, the month of peak prices, still is expected. During the last half of the year, when fresh production declines seasonally, cold storage eggs are an important source of egg supplies. Storage holdings reach their peak on August 1. Stocks this year are considerably less than in 1937, and the smallest on record.

Retail egg prices went up 2¼ cents a dozen from June to July, but were about the same as in last July. During the remainder of 1938 prices probably will be higher than in 1937.

POULTRY Downswing in poultry prices has commenced and prices most likely will decline more than usual until they hit bottom in December. Reductions probably will be more marked in young chickens than in fowl. Retail

price of roasting chickens dropped 1½ cents a pound from June to July, but prices still were slightly higher than a year ago. During the remainder of the year prices most likely will be below their 1937 level.

TIPS FOR FUR BUYERS

[*Concluded from page 5*]

is sliced into tiny strips and sewn together to make the fur wider and shorter. Sometimes the small cut strips are sewed together criss-cross, and the result is to give a herringbone effect. Again they may be "reset" to give the effect of a number of rich dark stripes.

By looking at the underside of fur it is possible to distinguish between a carefully cut and worked fur and a piece of patched fur. Where many small irregular pieces of fur are patched together, a fur is not a good quality grade. Simply because a fur is pieced together of many small furs, however, is no indication of its lack of quality. Mink coats, for example, are made up of many small skins. But where expensive furs are made up of many skins, the pattern is regular, the seams are evenly sewn, and are in perfect alignment.

● WHEN BUYING FURS count these critical points off on your fingers: Ask to see the same kind of fur coat in a range of prices to determine the quality of the fur. Differences are readily discernible. Undersleeves of fur coats should be made from the same quality furs as the top furs.

Buy a coat that fits you. Tight fitting coats soon result in split seams. Make sure there is room enough in the arms and the shoulders. There also should be enough room to permit of sitting down comforably. Loose fits are essential almost always in coats made up of small pelts or weak furs.

Examine the appearance of the fur. Good furs are bright and lustrous, cheap or poorly dressed furs are dull and lifeless.

Look for thin spots at the important friction points, the edges, the cuffs, the sleeves, the pockets, the back of the neck and the bottom of the coat. Here the fur should be especially thick.

Consumers get the use value out of many purchases almost immediately. But the use value of a fur coat extends over 2, 3, 4, and sometimes 5 years. Whether or not full value for the money is had from fur coats is not determined simply by what takes place at the time of sale. Care in the use of the garment is equally important. Weakest points in every fur garment are the friction points. Hat brims when they rub against fur collars cut away the hair, soon erode a thin bare line in the fur. Heavy jewelry which comes into contact with fur wears the fur away. Wearing collars high and close around the neck is an invitation to friction. Carrying bags, packages, or purses under the arm wears spots thin here prematurely. Sitting down in furs, of course, wears them out. Fur is likely to wear thin, also, at the wrists and under the sleeves. This wear cannot be avoided, but it can be reduced if care is taken.

● WHEN TEARS AND RIPS APPEAR in fur garments they should be repaired immediately. A small rip if neglected may easily work into a jagged tear requiring an entire new skin. To avoid rips and tears, however, the coat should be loosened or unbuttoned before sitting down in order to reduce the strain on the seams.

Dirt, dust, and grime invite moths to make furs their homes. It is true, however, that moths damage clean furs and that no furs are entirely free from the moth hazard. But to keep furs dust-free, they should be beaten occasionally with small, smooth sticks. Combing, done every two or three weeks, is also effective if done gently and with the grain. This helps to prevent matting, too. Vigorous shaking before hanging the coat is advisable. Use wide coat hangers without sharp edges.

● THE OLD JOKE RUNS that no one ever saw a skunk carrying an umbrella, but just the same it does no harm to the wearer of a fur coat to carry one. The natural oils which cause the fur of a living animal to shed rain are largely, if not entirely, removed in the tanning process. A small amount of moisture does not hurt a fur but a soaking can ruin the leather. If a fur does get wet, it should be combed lightly with the grain of the fur and then brushed in the same direction. To dry the fur it should be hung where cool dry air circulates rapidly. Dry, the fur should then be beaten lightly, and shaken. Wet furs should never be hung near a radiator, in an overheated room, or in a crowded closet, as the leather then becomes brittle and cracks and peels.

Some furs are treated to make them water repellent, but these patented treatments, while they do make furs water resistant, do not make them waterproof.

● EVEN WHEN WORN BY ANIMALS, furs deteriorate under heat and light. On the backs or around the necks of human beings they deteriorate even more rapidly. Excessive heat dries the oils out of the leather and light fades the fur itself. Strong sunlight discolors and singes furs. Dark furs even when undyed change color on exposure to too much light, and white furs yellow on over exposure. The old woman's recipe which advises one to sun furs is in fact a recommendation to ruin a fur. Furs should never be hung in a light place for any length of time.

● STORAGE OF FURS is a strategic consideration in making them last, both because of their susceptibility to attack by moths and because of the effect of excessive heat, light and humidity upon them. Consumers who habitually lug their furs to storage each summer have two kinds of storage to pick between these days, cold storage and fumigable storage. Both are recommended by experts. For fur owners who, on the other hand, store their pieces at home, the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Entomology has some good advice on the practice of moth control. This advice, which is contained in the pamphlet, "Clothes Moths and Their Control" (U. S. Department of Agriculture Farmers Bulletin No. 1353) may be obtained by sending 5 cents in cash to the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

ARE YOU IN THE MARKET FOR AN ELECTRIC RANGE?

[Concluded from page 15]

There's not much difference in the construction of various brands of open units.

Closed units are built in two ways: They are either "encased" or "enclosed." As between these two types, the encased variety has higher speed because it contains less metal to be heated up. Although encased units do not store as much heat as open units of similar size, according to a study of different surface units carried on by the Nebraska Experiment station, they are more economical to operate.

● TO GET THE MOST HEAT out of any type of surface unit at the least cost, the choice of utensil is important. With all types of heating units, part of the heat is transmitted by radiation and part by conduction. In order not to waste any of this heat, the cooking utensil should be large enough to cover the entire surface of the unit. A small frying pan placed on a large high-powered unit does not heat any faster than when placed on a unit of small wattage over which it fits exactly. Speed in cooking depends to a great extent on how many square inches of the bottom of the pan are receiving heat directly from the unit.

Pans should have straight rather than flaring sides. Straight sides permit less radiation of the heat from the utensil and unit into the air. Use flat bottom pans. This is a piece of advice that's sometimes difficult to follow. Most pots and pans warp after a little use. Pressed aluminum and thin steel frying pans are especially guilty of warping. Even thick cast iron and cast aluminum will bulge in time, but they resist warping much longer than thin metal. Cooking costs are increased when you use a pan with a sharp narrow rim around the bottom. The rim raises the utensil above the unit and there is loss of contact between pan bottom and unit. If the rim is shallow and wide there is less objection to it.

● BLACK BOTTOM PANS are definitely more economical to use with some types of units. With others, rough bottom aluminum pans mean only a negligible increase in fuel costs, especially if the electricity rate is low. When enamelware is used on any type of unit, it is not necessary to spend extra money for those with black bottoms.

Tight-fitting covers on kettles mean a real economy. It takes a great deal of heat to bring water to the boiling point. A cover quickens the process. Also to start water boiling, high wattage must be used, but the boiling process will continue on low if the kettle is covered, or the unit may be turned off and the heat stored in it be made use of to continue boiling. On most units low wattage uses one-fourth as much electricity as high wattage.

Does your family require a variety of foods at every meal? If so, you may want 4 units for top-of-the-stove cooking. Three, are sometimes considered an adequate number for the average family. Many cooks like one high wattage unit of 1500 to 2200-watt capacity for quick cooking of large quantities of food, sautéing, or deep-fat frying. Smaller units usually are from 1000 to 1500 watts.

Deep well cookers—five or six quart kettles which are fitted into the cooking surface of the range, are featured in many new models. They are seldom standard equipment. But if one prepares a great many stews, boiled dinners, steamed puddings, etc., using a well cooker means real economy in fuel charges.

Be sure to check on switches and convenience outlets. Switches can and should be placed so that they are easily accessible and constructed in such a way that they are protected from spilled food and liquid. Food spilled on switches is not only difficult to remove, but it is likely to cause a ground or short. One or 2 appliance outlets on the range are a great help to the kitchen work. They're handy for plugging in toasters, percolators, and irons.

FOR YOUR CONSUMER BOOKSHELF

HOW CHEAP ELECTRICITY PAYS ITS WAY. 1938, pp. 31. Address: Tennessee Valley Authority, Knoxville, Tenn. Free. Gives information on the effect of rate reduction on the amount of electricity purchased by consumers from a number of municipal and cooperative electric systems and supplied by Tennessee Valley Authority power. The balance sheet as of June 30, 1937, and the income statement for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1937, is given for each of the systems included in this report.

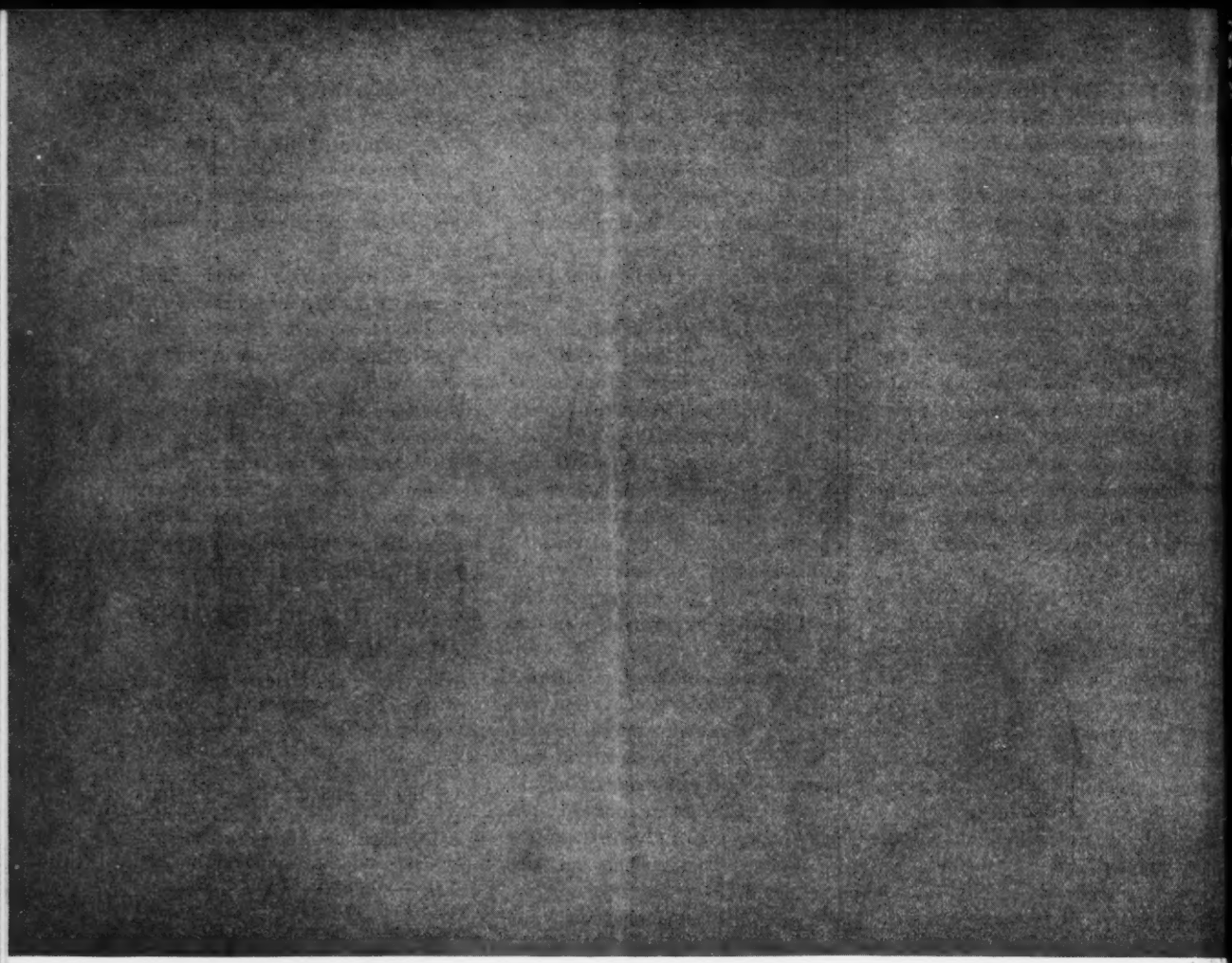
Our Point of View

The CONSUMERS' GUIDE believes that consumption is the end and purpose of production

To that end the CONSUMERS' GUIDE emphasizes the consumer's right to full and correct information on prices, quality of commodities, and on costs and efficiency of distribution. It aims to aid consumers in making wise and economical purchases by reporting changes in prices and costs of food and farm commodities. It relates these changes to developments in the agricultural and general programs of national recovery. It reports on cooperative efforts which are being made by individuals and groups of consumers to obtain the greatest possible value for their expenditures.

The producer of raw materials—the farmer—is dependent upon the consuming power of the people. Likewise, the consumer depends upon the sustained producing power of agriculture. The common interests of consumers and of agriculture far outweigh diversity of interests.

While the CONSUMERS' GUIDE makes public official data of the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Commerce, the point of view expressed in its pages does not necessarily reflect official policy but is a presentation of governmental and nongovernmental measures looking toward the advancement of consumers' interests.



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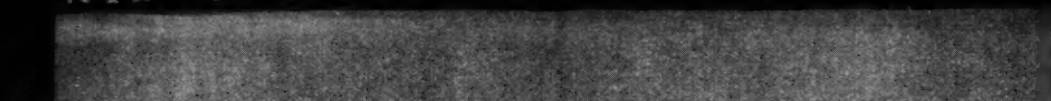
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